Accessibility Standard

Purpose:

Adopting standards to ensure the Secretary of State (SOS) website meets the needs of users with disabilities is important for two reasons. First, there are legal requirements. Federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, and corresponding state laws and regulations mandate that public programs be accessible. Second, website accessibility serves the public interest in ensuring, to the extent possible, full public participation in and access to government programs. Disability access standards for the SOS website are intended to provide users with disabilities convenient access to public information and convenient methods of transacting business with the SOS.

Background:

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has developed Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for web design and applications, and web architecture through its Web Accessibility Initiative.

SOS website accessibility means that people with disabilities, including people with changing abilities, can use the website. More specifically, website accessibility means that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the website, and that they can contribute to the website where and when appropriate.

Website accessibility encompasses features that accommodate visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological abilities of different levels. The (W3C) document "How People with Disabilities Use the Web" describes how different disabilities affect Web use and includes scenarios of people with disabilities using the Web.

(*Introduction to Web Accessibility [W3C Web Accessibility Initiative]* at <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intor/accessibility.php> [as of November 13, 2009].)

Policy:

The SOS has adopted a standard of meeting the WCAG 2.0 Level 2/Double AA standard as the goal for its website. These standards currently can be found at www.w3.org/TR/1999/WAI-WEBCONTENT-19990505/.

Incorporating these standards into SOS web governance has implications for web design, the use of web applications and for web architecture. Therefore, these standards will need to be cross-referenced or otherwise incorporated into those sections of web governance documentation for the Technical Team, the

Quality Assurance Team and others. As with other standards, the accessibility standards cannot inhibit or compromise security standards.